His Mark

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by jonnimir

Summary

Kinktober Day 3: Knife Play + Edgeplay.

Hannibal confronts Will in the catacombs in Palermo.

Notes

Calling this "knife play" rather than "Hannibal just generally fucking around with a knife" may be a stretch, but... there's at least masochism?

Hannibal hadn't intended to confront Will. He hears Will's interaction with Inspector Pazzi and brims with pride at the low threat in Will's voice, hears Will call his name and struggles with his desire to answer—but as they stand mere yards from each other in the dark labyrinthine space, he maintains a hold on himself. This was a message to Will, and an opportunity to explore his feelings at seeing him again; it is not the time for them to meet face to face. He's not ready to do so. Love, anger, bitterness, longing. Myriad feelings that fight each other, gnash their teeth in active conflict.

But when he hears Will make his declaration of forgiveness, he can't help himself. He emerges slowly from his hiding place, and his clothes rustle quietly.

And Will turns. Eyes wide, an echo of how he looked the last time they met. And Hannibal aches—oh, how he aches. From the good and the bad. From the bitter taste of betrayal. From the smallest spark of hope.

Will says nothing. Straightens his back, meets his eyes briefly before shifting his gaze just a bit to the side. Hannibal can smell fear, and something he can't place that makes his eyes narrow considerately.

"You seem again intent on making yourself the most desirable lure," he says softly. "Have you come to draw me to you as I drew you to me with my display?"

"I got here before the display. Spent the last week poking my head in occasionally, before you appeared."

"You knew where to find me."

"You showed me the entrance to your memory palace. I knew this is where I had to come."

He hums. He won't admit what this means to him. "And were your words just now sincere, or simply an attempt to draw me out of hiding?"

"I…" Will's lips are parted. They close and purse, a swallow barely visible in the dim lighting. "I didn't know what I was going to say when I said it. I just… opened my mouth. And trusted that some part of me would know what to say to you, even if I didn't."

"Relying on your subconscious to guide you." Will nods sharply. "That doesn't make your motives any clearer. Perhaps to either of us."

"I know what I want from you," Will says, but his voice is shaky. His breathing echoes in the cavernous space. "Do you know what you want from me?"

Hannibal takes a step closer, circles around him at a slight distance and watches Will's head follow him. A stalking predator, though Will himself is not prey.

And this becomes clearer when Hannibal passes between Will and a column, and Will takes the opportunity to pounce. He draws a knife seemingly out of nowhere—all Hannibal can see

is a flash of steel catching the candlelight—and Hannibal is backed against the column, a blade at his throat.

He knows at once that something is not as it seems; Will's grasp on the blade is clumsy, his angle of attack all wrong. It is all too easy to disarm him, to force the knife from his hand and catch it, to grab Will by the collar and thrust the knife under his chin, scraping dangerously. Hannibal wonders how sharp it is, and is tempted to simply draw it across his carotid artery to see. He would press until blood erupts and coats his face. He would lick it from his lips. He would have won.

But he can't do it. Not when the situation is so intriguing, with so many questions left unanswered.

"What was your plan?" he asks Will, who is shivering slightly.

"What do you *think* my plan was?" Will snaps. He bares his teeth, and Hannibal presses the flat of the blade harder against his neck until, yes—the tip catches slightly on the skin, and when he pulls it away a small amount of blood wells up. He can't see it in the dark, but he can smell it.

"I don't think you intended to kill me."

"I pulled a knife on you."

"But you used it ineffectively. Amateurishly. You couldn't possibly—"

Understanding hits him, and he licks his lips. He suddenly feels parched.

Will must recognize the moment of epiphany, because a tremor runs through him and his eyes momentarily close.

"You wanted me to disarm you," Hannibal says, and Will makes a small noise in his throat, vulnerable, maddening enough that Hannibal has to turn him quickly, shove him against the column hard enough for his brow to furrow in discomfort. The sight is far too satisfying. "You wanted me—or possibly anyone else who may witness or later examine the scene—to think your intent was to kill me, but it wasn't. You wanted me to kill you."

"Just do it," Will hisses. "Finish it. Finish what you started."

"Not until I know why."

Will's mouth pulls wide in a grimace. "Why? You ruined my life, and I ruined yours. Abigail died, and Jack and Alana nearly died just because they fell into our orbit. We destroyed them. We're both responsible."

"And yet you come offering your life, not attempting to take mine. Or even both of our lives."

Will swallows audibly. "Couldn't kill you," he whispers, and there's something wild and desperate in his eyes that Hannibal needs to see more clearly.

“You couldn’t kill me, just break my heart.” His tone is flat. He pulls the knife back then tugs it down the front of Will’s shirt, slicing through the button threads. Then pulls the fabric to the side and slices just as casually across Will’s right pectoral, wanting to provoke a response.

Will grits his teeth and hisses through them, but makes no attempt to fight back. Then snarls: “That’s why.”

“What is?”

“That… that I broke your heart.”

Hannibal nicks the center of his sternum vindictively. He doesn’t like the sound of those words, even though he was the one who used them to start with. “So you feel, what? Guilty?”

“Yes.”

“And you want to be punished for it?”

Will winces, but nods.

“That borders on trite, Will. I would have expected better from you.” But he doesn’t feel nearly as detached as he sounds. He watches the contraction of Will’s throat, his slight shiver. He thinks of Will offering this to him. How brave, how foolish. How melodramatic a turn in self-destructiveness. He had expected Abigail’s death might push Will to turn to drink and kill himself slowly through alcohol use. He had not expected this fiery burst of emotion.

He draws back and considers Will, who looks incredibly unsteady on his own feet, though leaning against the column.

“If you want to be punished, get on your knees.”

Will blinks at him. His lips part. And… the lighting makes it impossible to be sure, but Hannibal could swear his cheeks darken.

“Will. If this is the choice you have made, I advise you to stick to it.”

Will still hesitates, but then he lowers himself to his knees. He doesn’t make eye contact—his gaze seems to linger somewhere around Hannibal’s left shoulder.

“Remove your shirt.”

That makes his breathing stutter, before he slowly raises his eyes to land closer to Hannibal’s forehead. “Isn’t this a bit vulgar for your tastes?”

“Don’t presume to know my tastes, Will. And if you think I intend to molest you, you are mistaken—I simply need access to your back.”

Will huffs lightly, grits his jaw, and shrugs out of his shirt, which he discards carelessly next to him on the dirt floor.

Hannibal circles around behind him and examines his canvas. He kneels behind Will and watches his shoulders tense. When Hannibal lays a hand on Will's shoulder to ensure he remains still, he can hear the ragged edges of his breathing.

He makes one cut on his shoulder, which Will takes silently, before deciding the angle is too poor to do his penmanship justice.

He pushes Will down firmly with his hand on his spine, until he is face-down on the floor. He doesn't even resist, although his hands curl into fists, but he does shiver noticeably when Hannibal places the blade against his skin again.

"Hold still."

He carves the tall "H" without any problems. Several more letters follow similarly—deep enough to draw blood, deep enough to scar. And Will simply takes it, though gasping and shaking. On the final loop of an "L," he vocalizes a whimper that sounds hoarse, like it had been stuck in his throat for a long time.

"Do you know what I'm writing, Will?" he asks as he begins the next line.

"N-no. Too distracted by the p-pain."

"I'm signing my name."

He gives Will a moment between letters to absorb that. Presses experimentally along his spine as he begins the next, and is rewarded by a small moan. He can smell more in the air than just blood, now. It makes his nose flare and a ripple of satisfaction course through him.

"I'm finding your scent equally distracting," he says, casually enough to disguise the extent of his reaction.

"W-wouldn't think my blood would be a novelty to you anymore," Will mumbles.

"Your blood is not what I'm referring to."

Again he gives Will a moment to process the information. It takes him a while, but when the blade sinks into his skin again it seemed to register. "Oh," he says. Breathless. Horrified. "Oh, oh god. You… you can't…"

"I certainly can, Will," Hannibal says, his voice rumbling lower. "It's a very distinct scent. I had never smelled it on you before—at least not with such clarity. Evidently, this was because I was not satisfying your paraphilia."

He finishes the final "R" with a flourish and no further words spoken, and observes his work. It looks like a mess for now, blood streaking across his back and obscuring the true forms of the letters—but he is certain it will look better when it has scarred.

He drops the knife into the dirt directly next to Will's hand, who makes no move to secure it. Hannibal stands.

“As I said. Somewhat trite masochism, but this has been enlightening.” The sight of him shivering on the floor is also enlightening. He won’t rise while Hannibal is still there—won’t risk exposing how much pleasure he took in this event. And seeing his mark carved into Will's back satisfies something inside of Hannibal that he feels was starved until this moment. But he needs time to process his feelings, and he suspects he will have it, while Will takes time for the same.

“When you’re ready,” he says, “you will know where to find me. I’d advise against bringing a knife, this time. Unless you're particularly eager to demonstrate the true extent of your desires.”

And he leaves him there. Fades back into the shadows. He will wait for Will in Florence.

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